

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COYCHURCH CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND ON FRIDAY, 13 JUNE 2014 AT 2.00PM

Present:

Representing Bridgend County Borough Council

Councillor C L Jones
Councillor D R Pugh
Councillor C Westwood

Representing Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council

Councillor B Stephens JP

Representing Vale of Glamorgan Council

Councillor G John
Councillor K J Geary

Officers:

A Hobbs - Clerk and Technical Officer & Group Manager Streetworks
J Hamilton - Crematorium Manager and Registrar
S Hooper - Bereavement Services Manager
F Mantle - Finance Manager Technical and Corporate
A Rees - Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees

60 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON FOR THE YEAR

RESOLVED: That Councillor B Stephens be appointed Chairperson of the Coychurch Crematorium Joint Committee for the forthcoming year.

(Councillor B Stephens in the Chair)

61 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON FOR THE YEAR

RESOLVED: That Councillor C L Jones be appointed Vice-Chairperson of the Coychurch Crematorium Joint Committee for the forthcoming year.

62 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following Members for the reasons so stated:

Councillor E Dodd - Other Council Business
Councillor E Hacker - Hospital appointment
Councillor A Owen - Holiday
Councillor R Turner - Other Council Business
Councillor P J White - Other Council Business

63 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

64 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Coychurch Crematorium Joint Committee held on 7 March 2014 were approved as a true and accurate record.

65 ANNUAL REVIEW

The Bereavement Services Manager presented the report of the Clerk and Technical Officer which advised the Joint Committee of the performance of the Crematorium during 2013-14 which was a requirement of the Memorandum of Agreement. The report identified the performance of the crematorium relating to:-

- Number of Cremations;
- Service Standards;
- Planned Expenditure;
- Achievement of Business Plan Objectives.

The Bereavement Services Manager informed the Committee that the number of cremations carried out were 1,722, with 227 of those cremations attributed to the temporary closure of Margam Crematorium.

The Bereavement Services Manager highlighted the results of the Quarterly Review Customer Questionnaire which showed that the overall satisfaction level of good or excellent remained at 100%. She stated that the Crematorium Manager and Registrar had responded to the one negative comment received.

The Bereavement Services Manager outlined the programme of expenditure for 2013-14 which was to refurbish the lodge which had a proposed expenditure of £20k, revised to zero expenditure, and CAMEO payments revised from the proposed figure of £42k to £43k.

The Bereavement Services Manager also informed the Committee on the progress made on the service objectives namely, the completion of Chapel improvements, the replacement to the yard gate and provision of new footpaths. Planning consent had been received from CADW for the new crematory extension and tenders sent out. The budget strategy review had also been completed and had been reported to the previous meeting of the Joint Committee.

RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee noted the report.

66 CREMATORIUM EXTENSION

The Bereavement Services Manager reported on an update on the procurement process to modify the cremator building ahead of the works to replace the existing life expired cremators. She stated that in order to avoid undue delay in the works proceeding, approval was sought and gained from the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Joint Committee to enter into a procurement exercise and to issue contract documents for the works required to the cremator building.

The Bereavement Services Manager informed the Committee that tenders for the works had now been received and evaluated, with the lowest bid in the amended sum of £172,363.84, which exceeded the original £150k estimated for the building extension work. Modifications had been made to the designs to enable a section of the roof to be removed and the inclusion in the tender of a specialist lift to service the cremators had accounted for this increase. Legal advice had been sought and it had been confirmed that the tenders were considered to be valid and represented value for money. She stated

that the additional costs relating to the revised works would be met from the reserve held in the accounts of the Joint Committee.

In response to a question from the Joint Committee, the Crematorium Manager and Registrar stated that consultation had taken place with the Environmental Health Department regarding the works to be carried out which would involve early morning working and into the evening, which would be consistent with the previous works carried out to build the new office at the Crematorium. She stated that noise levels would however be monitored.

RESOLVED: (1) That the Joint Committee noted the decision of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Joint Committee in seeking their approval to enter into a procurement exercise and to issue contract documents for the works to extend the cremator building.

(2) That the Joint Committee approved the tender in the sum of £172,363.84 and the award of the contract to Stafford Construction.

67 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2013/14

The Finance Manager Technical and Corporate presented the unaudited Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2013-14 to the Joint Committee

The Finance Manager Technical and Corporate reported that for the past few years turnover at the Crematorium had been less than £1m, and as such the Crematorium was not required to produce a statement of accounts under the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations as they had been classified as being exempt by being deemed as a minor joint committee. During 2013-14 the income received by the Crematorium exceeded the £1m threshold and as such it could no longer be classified as a minor joint committee and was now required to produce a statement of accounts for the year ending 31 March 2014. The Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2005 (as amended) require the Joint Committee to sign and date the accounts by 30 June and certify that they present a true and fair view. The Joint Committee will then be required to reapprove the accounts as soon as reasonably practicable after the receipt of the Auditor's final findings and must be published by no later than the 30 September.

The Finance Manager Technical and Corporate informed the Joint Committee that the unaudited Statement of Accounts for the financial year ending 31 March 2014 had been completed and would now be placed on public deposit and subject to audit by KPMG, the Auditors appointed for the Joint Committee by the Wales Audit Office. Once audited, would need to be approved by the Joint Committee by 30 September and presented to the next meeting of the Joint Committee on 19 September 2014 for approval.

The Finance Manager Technical and Corporate informed the Committee that the accounts show a net surplus of £464k, which included an adjustment in respect of holiday entitlements as required by accounting practice. The accumulated useable reserves for the Crematorium are £1.002m as at 31 March 2014 compared to £538k in the preceding year.

The Finance Manager Technical and Corporate explained the more significant variations from the budget with a net underspend on £4k on employees as a result of a part year vacancy, a net underspend of £77k on premises costs due mainly to a decrease in planned maintenance and a reduction in the annual charge for business rates due to a rating revaluation. The Finance Manager Technical and Corporate advised the Joint Committee that £20k of the reported overspend within supplies and services related to insurance costs. Further investigation had identified that the charge shown in 2013-14 was incorrect and would be adjusted in 2014-15. The Finance Manager Technical and Corporate also informed the Joint Committee of a net overspend on £15k on administration as a result of an increase in central support recharges due to the change in methodology used. There had been an over recovery of income of £370k as a result of additional cremations resulting from the closure due to fire of Margam Crematorium, which increased the number of cremations by 27%.

The Finance Manager Technical and Corporate reported that the surplus for the year of £464k reflected the decision to set aside money towards planned future works in relation to premises and equipment accompanied by the impact of additional cremations due to the temporary closure of Margam Crematorium. This surplus had been added to the accumulated reserve for the Crematorium bringing the total of that reserve to £1.002m.

RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee noted the unaudited Statement of Accounts for 2013-14.

68 VOTE OF THANKS

The Members of the Joint Committee referred to the visit to the Crematorium grounds held prior to the meeting of the Committee and extended their thanks to the Officers of the Joint Committee and the staff at the Crematorium on the impressive facilities at the Crematorium.

The meeting closed at 2.23pm.